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SPECIAL.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.

DO YOU KEEP A COW?

PREPARED IN THE BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

You are a farmer in a southern State with some cotton growing every year, maybe with all your farm tied up in cotton growing and you and all your family dependent on the money which you hope to get on this crop. Do you keep a cow? If you do, why do you keep her? If you keep her for milk, what do you do with her calf? What kind of a bull do you breed her to?

Suppose you live a long way from the city, with roads that are none too good. You keep a cow or two to supply your family with milk and butter. You are so far from town that you are not able to sell milk as a business. So you ought to have cows that will keep your family supplied and that will produce calves that some one will want to buy.

Just now our country does not have enough beef to feed its own people. So every calf which will be worth feeding for beef can be sold for a good price.

Suppose you live a long way from town and keep only one or two cows. Do you know that the calves from these cows will be worth twice as much if you breed the cows to a good beef bull as if you breed them to any little scrub that may be near you?

BREED TO A GOOD BULL.

When good calves are 8 or 9 months old, men who feed cattle will pay from \$20 to \$30 each for them. Now, these men always like to find a large number of calves in a neighborhood. They do not like to spend a lot of time hunting for them. So if you want to breed good calves that will be worth \$20 to \$30 each, you should get several of your neighbors to do the same thing. Then let them get their friends to do it, and before you know it the whole county will be breeding good cattle. Then people will hear about it, and the male calves will be bought up rapidly at good prices. If your whole county

NOTE.—Intended for farmers in the cotton belt who desire to diversify their farming because of the economic crisis which adversely affects the cotton crop at this time.

should do this it will surprise you how soon the scrub cattle will disappear and how much more money your cattle will bring you.

USE THE SAME BREED.

When you and your friends decide to improve your native cattle, you should next decide what breed to use. Don't begin until you have determined that you will use only one breed and that you will then stick to the same breed. You must decide on the breed yourselves. If you select either Hereford, Aberdeen-Angus, Shorthorn (Durham), Red Poll, or Devon you will not go far wrong. Of these breeds the Herefords and Devons are the best grazers, but the Devons are small. The Shorthorn and Red Poll cows are the best milkers. The Aberdeen-Angus are good grazers and fatten well. Get your county demonstration agent to give you advice before you buy your bull.

HOW TO GET THE BULL.

A good beef bull will cost about \$150. Sometimes he will cost a little more; sometimes he may be bought for a little less. The cheapest way for you to do would be to organize a bull club with enough members to represent the ownership of 200 cows. Four bulls would be needed for these cows. Divide your membership into four sections or "blocks," with members in each block living near each other. Then change these bulls around every two years, and it may be eight years before any of you have to think about buying another bull. The plan works like this: In 1915 block No. 1 gets bull No. 1, block No. 2 gets bull No. 2, block No. 3 gets bull No. 3, block No. 4 gets bull No. 4. In 1917 block No. 1 gets bull No. 4, block No. 2 gets bull No. 1, block No. 3 gets bull No. 2, block No. 4 gets bull No. 3. In 1919 you make another shift, each block getting a bull which was in another block for the two years before, and in 1921 you make the final shift. In 1923 you will have to buy four new bulls, if none have gone wrong in the meantime. Your old bulls can be fattened and sold and the money used toward the purchase of new bulls.

You see that it is absolutely necessary to use bulls of the same breed. If you do not, you will have a lot of cattle in 8 or 10 years that are not much better than the scrub cows you started with.

When you get ready to buy your bulls send a good man to a good breeder and let him make the purchase for your club. If you do not have the money, get your local banker to lend it to you. He should do it, because cattle are about as good security for loans as anything else. Each member of the club should pay for bulls depending on the number of cows in his herd. A service fee of \$1 to \$1.50 should

be charged for each cow and paid into the treasury of the club. The man who keeps the bull in each block should be allowed free service for his cows in return for the keep of the bull.

In everything that you do get the advice of your county demonstration agent. If your county does not have an agent, write to your State agricultural college.

Still another way to get service to a good bull would be to patronize a pure-bred bull owned by a stockman in your neighborhood. Service fees of \$1 to \$2 are usually charged. Above all things, if you want good calves which will command good prices as feeders, do not breed your cows to scrub or dairy bulls.

CARE OF THE BULL.

Your bull club should see that the bulls are properly cared for. Do not allow them to be kept up in the stable or in a dry lot without exercise. Give them a good pasture where they can graze and exercise. This is necessary or they will not get a good percentage of calves. During the breeding season let them have enough grain (2 parts corn, 1 part bran or oats, by weight) to keep them in good condition. At other times plenty of pasture in summer and a good allowance of nice cowpea hay in winter will keep them in good shape. Begin giving them some grain about a month before the breeding season opens. A liberal allowance of silage, say 20 to 30 pounds daily, will be good for the bull in winter along with the hay he gets.

CARE OF THE COW AND CALF.

The cows should have a pasture to run in during the summer. This pasture should be made up of Bermuda grass and lespedeza (Japan clover) and not be a woods pasture containing only shade and water, as so many pastures do. If Bermuda grass does not grow naturally in the pasture, get some sod from a field and in rainy weather put small pieces of sod about 8 or 10 feet apart over the pasture.

If the cow is milked during the summer she should be given a little feed each night and morning. This feed may consist of some cotton seed or cottonseed meal, a little corn, or any other feed which may be produced on the farm. In the fall and winter the cow should be allowed to graze oats or other cover crops when the soil is dry and she will not hurt the crop by tramping. Give her some good cowpea, lespedeza, or Bermuda hay and some cotton seed at milking time.

When she calves let the calf take what milk it will for the first few days. After the fifth day the milk may be used for the table. The calf can then be allowed to take part of the milk at milking time, or it may be weaned and fed on skim milk. As soon as the

calf is a few days old a small manger or box should be placed in the lot where it is kept and it should be offered some fine-stemmed alfalfa, lespedeza, or clover hay, and it should be given a little shelled corn. It will begin eating a little shelled corn when 2 or 3 weeks old. Give it an ear a day for a while, and as it gets larger it may be given a handful of cotton seed a day. Turn the calf on the oats, rye, wheat, or crimson clover as soon as the crop gets big enough to be grazed. The green feed will help the calf wonderfully and with a little good hay will make it grow right along.

If the calf is a bull, castrate it at 2 months of age, if possible, for at this age castration will not hurt the calf and will not give it a setback. If in the summer time, castrate anyway and watch the calf to see that blowflies do not bother it. A little pine tar smeared on the scrotum will keep them away. If the calf is treated as here outlined it may be weaned at 4 to 5 months of age and not experience a setback. It should grow into a nice calf that would sell well by the time it is 8 to 12 months old.

As soon as the cow comes in heat after calving breed her to a good beef bull.

Farmers desiring further information concerning the raising of cattle in the South should write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for the following bulletins:

Farmers' Bulletin 580. Beef Production in the South.

Farmers' Bulletin 612. Breeds of Beef Cattle.